

# Office of Associate Director for Interagency Programs: Summary Statement

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On behalf of the Director, NIEHS, the Associate Director for Interagency Programs is responsible for the following program areas.

## U.S.-U.S.S.R. Cooperation

Collaboration between Soviet and American environmental health scientists is carried out under the auspices of two cooperative agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union. Under the Medical Science and Public Health Cooperative Agreement, scientists from both countries are conducting joint research on heart disease, cancer, arthritis, influenza and acute respiratory diseases, and health problems associated with environmental pollution. The Director, NIEHS, is U.S. Coordinator for the environmental health activities under the Health Agreement.

1977 was the fifth year of formal collaboration in environmental health research between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. The first year was concerned largely with establishing working relationships and agreeing on areas of joint study. Joint research efforts were initiated in the second year of the Agreement and involved exchange visits between scientists of both sides. The research results developed during the second and third year of cooperative research were presented by American and Soviet scientists at a symposium in Riga, Latvia, in December 1974. The results of this symposium were published in 1976 in both the United States and the Soviet Union.

Scientific results from cooperative research during 1975 and 1976 were presented at a second joint symposium held in Marineland, Florida in December, 1976. The results of this meeting will be published during 1978 in both the United States and the Soviet Union.

Current collaborative research efforts are divided into four problem areas aimed at developing methods for the quantitative evaluation of, predict-

ing, and studying the long-term biological effects of environmental chemical agents and studying the biological effects of physical factors in the environment.

By the end of 1977, over 45 scientific papers will have been published by American and Soviet scientists on the results of environmental health research conducted under this Agreement.

The Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. is aimed at addressing the most important aspects of problems of the environment, including the study of pollution and its effects on life. A number of agencies participate in this Agreement which is under the general direction of the Administrator, EPA. The Director, NIEHS, serves as HEW representative to the agreement and as cochairman of the working group for one of its areas, the Biological and Genetic Effects of Pollution. Effort in this area has been focused on the mutagenic potential of environmental contaminants, the toxic effects of heavy metals in the environment, and the potential environmental health hazards associated with the extraction, processing and utilization of oil from shale.

During 1977, program activity under this agreement consisted of the third joint workshop on Basic and Practical Approaches to Environmental Mutagenesis and Carcinogenesis held in San Francisco, and the first joint workshop on Health Effects of Oil Shale Development, held in Denver, Colorado.

## Energy-Related Research

As part of the high priority accorded by the Federal Government to solving the energy problems facing the nation, the Director and staff of NIEHS are involved in a variety of activities to elucidate the potential adverse health impacts of energy tech-

nologies.

During the summer and fall of 1974, an OMB/CEQ task met to identify needed research on the potential adverse health and environmental problems associated with energy use. As part of the report of the Interagency Working Group on Health and Environmental Effects of Energy Use published in November, 1974, the Health Sub-Group, co-chaired by the Director, NIEHS, recommended that research be pursued in several areas. As a result of the work of this task force, NIEHS was assigned the responsibility, and given additional funds, to develop research programs to address a number of important energy-related questions, including the development of physiological indicators to estimate damage to man; the determination of mechanisms of incorporation, metabolism, deposition, and turnover of hazardous agents; the determination of the relationship of metabolism and fate and the toxicology of particulates and organic compounds; the determination of the dose-effect relations for physiological effects and for mutagenic agents; the development and testing of test models for extrapolation of cellular and animal data to man; the identification of damage to cells and cell components; and the determination of immediate and long-term effects of critical pollutants on selected ecosystems and organisms in the marine environment.

During the period 1975–1977, NIEHS initiated a number of new projects focused on the problems indicated above. In January, 1976, NIEHS co-sponsored, along with NIOSH, EPA, and ERDA, a retreat for about 150 scientists working on energy-related health problems. NIEHS staff continues to participate with staff of other agencies in efforts devoted to the identification and solution of energy-related health problems.

## **Interagency Coordination**

During 1976–1977, a report on Federal Agency Support for Environmental Health Research was completed at the request of the Senate Appropriations Committee. This report summarizes the environmental health research responsibilities, functions, and coordination efforts of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Environmental Protection Agency, Energy Research and Development Administration, National Science Foundation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Department of Transportation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of the Interior, and Department of Defense. These agencies will spend approximately \$528 million for environmental health research and related programs in FY 1978.